



THE CATTLE-TRAIN.

COUNTING THE STEPS.

"Oh, how many steps there are to take!"

Said Madge, in her own sweet way;

"There are steps for baby and grand-mamma,

And it's nothing but steps all day.

"Now papa calls, I must surely go,

And Tommy says, 'Find my ball,'

But the steps I take for you, mamma,
I never count them at all."

"And why does my darling never count
The steps that she takes for me?"

"Because," and closing her lips with a
kiss,

"I love you so, don't you see?"

She drew away, but the tears ran fast

From the eyes that had weary grown;

For I had so long been counting the steps,

As I took them one by one—

A child of His, yet needing to learn,

With so many steps to take,

We need never count them as we go,

When taken for Christ's own sake.

THE CATTLE TRAIN.

The following incident was related some time ago by Miss L. M. Alcott, the well-known author:

"Somewhere about Fitchburg, as we stopped for twenty minutes at a station. I amused myself by looking out of a window at a waterfall which came tumbling over the rocks and spread into a wide pool that flowed up to the railway. Close by stood a cattle-train, and the mournful sounds that came from it touched my heart.

"Full in the hot sun stood the cars, and every crevice of room between the bars across the doorways was filled with pathetic noses sniffing eagerly at the sultry gusts that blew by, with now or then a fresher breath from the pool that lay dimpling before them. How the

animals must have suffered—in sight of water, with the cool dash of the fall tantalizing them, and not a drop to wet their mouths!

"The cattle lowed dismally, and the sheep tumbled one over the other in their frantic attempts to reach the blessed air, bleating so plaintively the while that I was tempted to get out and see

what I could do for them. But the time was nearly up, and while I hesitated two little girls appeared, and did the kind deed better than I could have done it.

"I could not hear what they said, but as they worked away so heartily their little tanned faces grew lovely to me, in spite of their old hats, their bare feet and their shabby gowns. One pulled off her apron, spread it on the grass, and emptying upon it the berries from her pail, ran to the pool and returned with it dripping, to hold it up to the suffering sheep, who stretched their hot tongues gratefully to meet it and drank the precious water with an eagerness that made little barefoot's task a hard one.

"But to and fro she ran, never tired, though the small pail was so soon empty; and her friend meanwhile pulled great handfuls of clover and grass for them, and, having no pail, filled her 'picking dish' with water to throw on the poor, dusty noses appealing to her through the bars. I wish I could have told those tender-hearted children how beautiful their

compassion made that hot, noisy place, and what a sweet picture I took away with me of those two little sisters of charity."

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

THE BOOK IN THE FIELD.

Some careless reader has left this book in the field. It must have been left there a long time ago, before the flowers had begun to send their tiny sprouts out of the ground. Now that they are in bloom we find it beautifully decorated. See how prettily the vines have grown between the pages and the lovely blossoms peep out at the edges! The butterflies light upon its cover and a saucy bug trots gaily over its pages, utterly careless of the solemn and profound truths they may contain. A busy ant hurries past, not having time to see what this strange object in the field is.

Though the book makes a very pretty picture as it lies there on the ground surrounded by the wild flowers, it is not serving the purpose for which it was made. It makes us think of some people we occasionally meet, who are always beautifully dressed, and we admire their appearance very much, for they make a pretty picture, but who are living comparatively useless lives and are not doing the work which they were intended to do.



THE BOOK IN THE FIELD.